

# MEMORANDUM

January 7, 2015

**TO:** Landmarks Board

**FROM:** Lesli Ellis, Comprehensive Planning Manager  
Debra Kalish, Senior Assistant City Attorney  
James Hewat, Senior Historic Preservation Planner  
Marcy Cameron, Historic Preservation Planner  
Angela Smelker, Historic Preservation Intern

**SUBJECT:** Public hearing and consideration of the proposed designation of the property at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. as an individual local historic landmark per Section 9-11-5 of the Boulder Revised Code 1981 (HIS2014-00070).

## STATISTICS:

1. Site: 747 12th St.
2. Date of Construction: 1916
3. Zoning: RL-1 (Residential Low)
4. Lot Size: 12,478 sq. ft.
5. Owner: 747 Twelfth Street, LLC
6. Applicant: Landmarks Board

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Landmarks Board recommend approval of the proposed individual local historic landmark designation for the property at 747 12th St. and adopt the following motion:

The Landmarks Board recommends to the City Council that it designate the property at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. as a local historic landmark, to be known as the **Cowgill House**, finding that it meets the standards for individual landmark designation in Sections 9-11-1 and 9-11-2, B.R.C. 1981, and adopts the staff memorandum, including the following as the findings of the board:

## FINDINGS

The Landmarks Board finds, based upon the application and evidence presented, that the proposed designation application is consistent with the purposes and standards of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, and:

1. The proposed designation will protect, enhance, and perpetuate a building reminiscent of a past era and important in local and state history and provide a significant example of architecture from the past. Sec. 9-11-1(a), B.R.C. 1981.
2. The proposed designation will maintain an appropriate setting and environment and will enhance property values, stabilize the neighborhood, promote tourist trade and interest, and foster knowledge of the city's living heritage. 9-11-1(a), B.R.C. 1981.
3. The buildings proposed for designation have exceptionally high architectural, historic and environmental significance. The property is associated with Marthana and Josephine Cowgill, who cared for tuberculosis patients in the house prior to purchasing the Mesa Vista Sanatorium; the property possesses a high level of architectural integrity as an example of architecture of that period, and the property has been identified as contributing resource to the identified potential University Hill local and National Register of Historic Places District. Sec. 9-11-2(a)(1), B.R.C. 1981.
4. In this case, designation over an owner's objection is appropriate because (i) the house and garage are of exceptionally high architectural, historic, and environmental significance; (ii) the house and garage are in need of protection provided through the designation as the buildings are proposed for demolition; and (iii) it has not been demonstrated that the cost of restoration or repair would be unreasonable or that it would not be feasible to preserve the buildings and incorporate them into future development plans.
5. The proposed designation draws a reasonable balance between private property rights and the public interest in preserving the city's cultural, historic, and architectural heritage by ensuring that demolition of buildings important to that heritage will be carefully weighed with other alternatives. Due to the location of the house on the south side of the lot, and the gradual grade change away from the house, redevelopment of the site in a manner that preserves the historic buildings and provides for a modern residential use will be possible if the property is individually landmarked. 9-11-1(b), B.R.C. 1981.
6. The proposed designation is consistent with the criteria specified in Section 9-11-5(c), B.R.C. 1981.

#### **SUMMARY:**

- The purpose of the current review is for the Board to determine whether the proposed designation of the property at 747 12th St. conforms with the purposes and standards of Sections 9-11-1, *Purpose and Legislative Intent*, and 9-11-2, *City Council May Designate Landmarks and Historic Districts*, B.R.C. 1981.
- On Mar. 19, 2014, the applicants submitted a demolition permit application to demolish the house and garage at 747 12th St.

- On Mar. 26, 2014, the Landmarks design review committee (Ldrc) referred the application to the Landmarks Board for a public hearing, finding there was “probable cause to believe that the property may be eligible for designation as an individual landmark.”
- On June 4, 2014, the Landmarks Board imposed a stay-of-demolition for a period of up to 180 days in order to seek alternatives to the demolition of the house and garage.
- During the stay-of-demolition, staff and representatives of the Landmarks Board and Historic Boulder, Inc. met with the applicant and owner on several occasions to discuss alternatives to the demolitions, including landmarking, rehabilitation, and the possibility of constructing an addition to the main house. The applicants have indicated they do not consider the buildings historically or architecturally significant and are not interested in preserving the buildings.
- On Oct. 1, 2014, the Landmarks Board passed a resolution to initiate landmark designation for the property located at 747 12th St. pursuant to § 9-11-3 , *Initiation of Designation for Individual Landmarks and Historic Districts*, B.R.C. 1981, finding that it met the criteria for Individual Landmark Designation.
- Detailed research and analysis indicate the property possesses exceptional architectural and historic significance and integrity, is an important example of early twentieth century architecture modified to function as a convalescent home for tuberculosis patients in the 1920s and is associated with the Cowgill family who made a significant contribution to the care of tuberculosis patients in Boulder. As such, staff finds it is of exceptionally high architectural and historic integrity and is eligible for individual landmark designation pursuant to Section 9-11-1(a), B.R.C.1981.
- The property needs the protection of the preservation ordinance, as the house and garage are proposed for demolition.
- It has not been demonstrated that it would be unfeasible or cost prohibitive to preserve the house and incorporate it into future development plans.
- Because of its exceptional significance and that the proposal would result in the loss of a very important piece of the Boulder’s heritage, staff also finds that, in this case, designation over the owner’s objection would be consistent with Section 9-11-1(b) of the historic preservation ordinance, as redevelopment of the site in a manner that preserves the historic buildings and provides for a modern residential use will be possible if the property is individually landmarked.

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:**

The approximately 12,500 sq. ft. property is located on the west side of the 700 block of 12<sup>th</sup> Street, between Baseline Rd. and Cascade Ave. and located in the identified potential University Hill Historic District (local landmark and National Register of Historic Places).

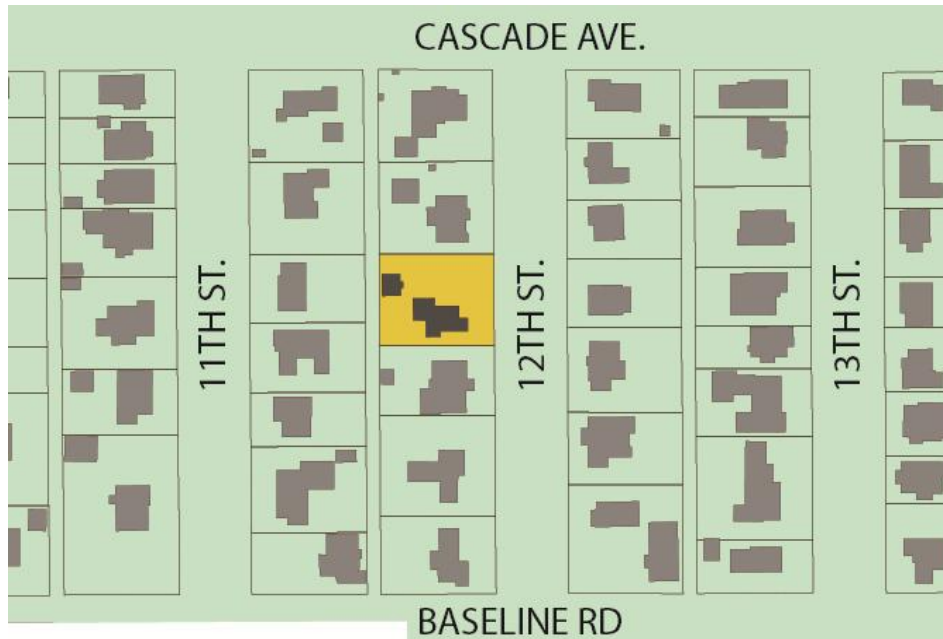


Figure 1. Location Map showing 747 12th St.

The one-story blonde brick main house at 747 12th St. was constructed in 1916 and features a pyramidal hipped roof with overhanging eaves and off-center, open front porch with solid brick walls and brick pillar supports on the east facing facade. The porch is accessed by a set of stairs on the north side, with the front door is centered and a group of three, one over one, double-hung windows are located to its right. Window surrounds on the house include brick sills. The building rests on a rough faced stone foundation. *See Attachment E: Current Photographs.*



Figure 2. East Façade, 747 12th St, 2014.





*Figure 3. East Façade, 747 12th St, 2014.*



*Figure 4. East Façade, 747 12th St, c.1949*

The north (side) elevation of the house features a small gable-roofed projection with a large brick corbelled chimney and a group of three windows at the basement and first levels. One-over-one, double-hung windows behind non-historic metal storm windows on all faces of the house appear to be historic.



*Figure 5. Bay window and chimney at north elevation, 747 12th St, 2014.*



*Figure 6. North (side) elevation of house, 2014*





*Figure 7. West (rear) Face of House, 2014*

The west (rear) elevation features a low gable roofed addition that is clad in wood shingles. The exact date of construction of the addition is unknown, but it appears on the c. 1938 tax assessor card and is typical of 1920s construction, with wood double-hung windows and wood shingles. A fieldstone chimney is located on the north side of the addition.



*Figure 8. West (rear) Face of House, 2014*





*Figure 9. Bay window and rear porch at south elevation, 747 12<sup>th</sup> St., 2014.*



*Figure 10. West elevation (facing alley) of garage, 2014.*

The south elevation features a bay window with corbelled brick, and two groupings of three double-hung windows, similar to the north elevation. A wooden porch wrapping from the west end of the south face to the west side of the house differs in fenestration from the main body of the house with nine-light casement windows set behind either wood or aluminum storm windows.





*Figure 11. East elevation (facing 12<sup>th</sup> St.) of garage, 2014.*

A brick, hipped roof garage is located at the rear of the lot, along the alley. Constructed in 1929, is the simply detailed accessory building features over-hanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, and large one-over-one windows on the south and east elevations. A pair of two large wooden double-hung windows are located on the south (side) elevation with the east elevation (facing 12<sup>th</sup> St.) featuring a centrally-located wooden paneled door flanked by two double-hung windows with brick sills. A small gable-roofed portico is located above the entrance. Permit research indicates that in 1938 under the ownership of Dr. Oscar Gilbert, a request to convert the garage into living space was denied by the City of Boulder. The garage is identified as an associated building on the Historic Building Inventory Form (1991) and as potentially contributing to a National Register and Local historic district on the Cultural Resource Re-evaluation Form (2001).

The house and garage appear to remain largely intact from their original construction with the frame addition at the rear of the house was constructed prior to 1938. Building permit records and on-site inspection of the house and garage do not indicate additional changes, other than the installation of aluminum storm windows. See Attachment C: Tax Assessor Card.





*Figure 12. 700 block of 12<sup>th</sup> St., facing north, 2014.*



*Figure 13. Examples of houses on the 00 block of 12<sup>th</sup> St., 2014  
(L-R: 707 12<sup>th</sup> St., 750 12<sup>th</sup> St., 740 12<sup>th</sup> St., and 728 12<sup>th</sup> St.)*

The lot slopes to the north and features mature landscaping, including a very large pine tree at the front of the house. The 700 block of 12<sup>th</sup> St. is notably intact, with examples of an eclectic mix of architecture of the 1910s to the 1930s, including Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival and Craftsman Bungalow houses. Three houses on the block, including



one that has been designated as an individual landmark, were designed by noted Boulder architect Glen Huntington. Many of the properties on the block are associated with significant figures to Boulder's history. In addition to the Cowgills, the block was also home to faculty members of the University of Colorado, prominent businessmen and socialites. The 2001 Re-Survey identified buildings that would be contributing and non-contributing to a potential National or Local historic district. 12 of the 14 (85%) primary buildings on the 700 block of 12<sup>th</sup> St. were considered to be contributing to a potential district. The accessory building at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. was the only one of the six accessory buildings on the block found to be potentially contributing. Little change appears to have occurred in the past twelve years to affect the historic integrity of the district.

## **PROPERTY HISTORY**

The house at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. was purchased shortly after construction in 1916 by Samuel Cowgill for his daughters Marthana and Josephine, who resided there from 1916 until 1936, when they sold the property to Dr. Oscar Gilbert. The Cowgills and Dr. Gilbert are associated with the Mesa Vista Sanatorium, which provided care for tubercular patients from its establishment in 1918 through the 1960s.

### **The Cowgill Sisters and the Mesa Vista Sanatorium**<sup>1</sup>

Tuberculosis was one of the most common and deadly diseases in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. With no identified drug or vaccine, doctors encouraged patients to seek healthier climates, noting that rest, fresh air and a good diet would help strengthen the body's defenses. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, tuberculosis sanatoriums were established across the country. The Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan, founded by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and the Seventh Day Adventists, was one of the most influential.

In the 1896, the Boulder-Colorado Sanitarium, a branch of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, opened. First located on University Hill, facilities were soon constructed at 4<sup>th</sup> and Mapleton Ave. The institution was initially founded to care for tuberculosis patients, but it was "soon found that this was a handicap to the work, for other patients were often afraid to come because of their dread of this disease."<sup>2</sup> To meet the need of a tuberculosis facility, smaller treatment centers were opened. In 1918, Dr. Gilbert, a nationally-recognized expert on the disease, founded the Mesa Vista Sanatorium at 2121 North St. (now 2121 Mesa Ave.) specifically for the care of tuberculosis patients. In 1931, Dr. Gilbert sold the facility to Marthana and Josephine Cowgill, who operated the sanatorium until their deaths in the 1960s.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sanatorium* refers to a hospital designed for treatment of a specific disease. *Sanitarium* refers to a health resort. The terms can be used interchangeably in modern terminology. [www.lawprose.org](http://www.lawprose.org)

<sup>2</sup> Brief History –Boulder, Colorado Sanitarium. Carnegie Library for Local History. Accessed 19 December 2014. <http://www.boulderlibrary.org/cpdfs/328-145-18.pdf>

Josephine (b. 1878) and Marthana (b. 1885) Cowgill were born in Cadiz, Indiana, to Samuel C. and Carolyn Macy Cowgill. Samuel owned a number of successful drain tile factories across the country and family later moved from Indiana to San Benito, Texas. The Cowgills had four daughters and two sons, all of whom graduated from Earlham College, a Quaker liberal arts college in Richmond, Indiana.

During World War I, Josephine pursued a nurse's training program, becoming a registered nurse. Marthana had been a school teacher in Texas until she contracted tuberculosis. According to an interview with Marthana's son, Dr. Joseph Cowgill, Marthana, each of her five siblings, and her parents all contracted the disease at some point in their lives. Marthana's condition was considered severe and in 1915 she traveled to Boulder to stay at the Alps, a summer resident hotel in Boulder Canyon. Soon after, her sister Josephine was sent to the Alps to help care for her.

In 1920, Josephine received a degree from the University of Colorado Nursing School. Following Marthana's recovery, the sisters began operating a convalescent home at their residence at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. and later 2107-09 Bluff St.<sup>3</sup> A 1951 newspaper article about the history of the Mesa Vista Sanatorium notes that the "after the financial difficulties suffered by their father in the 1920-21 depression, [the Cowgill sisters] decided to rent out rooms in their home to other tuberculosis sufferers."<sup>4</sup> In Dr. Cowgill's interview, he stated that there were about four or five patients that lived at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. during this time. In addition to taking care of patients, Josephine began working as an office nurse for Dr. Oscar M. Gilbert at the Mesa Vista Sanatorium.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1920s, Marthana adopted two boys, David and Joseph. Marthana and Josephine also cared for two children of their sister, Louise Whitney, who had died of tuberculosis some years earlier. Later, the sisters also adopted Bergen, an orphaned son of one of their patients. The Cowgill family was active in the Quaker community in Boulder and is cited in a 1960 article as the "backbone of the current Quaker fellowship."

In 1930, Marthana and Josephine took over the management of Mesa Vista Sanatorium from Dr. Gilbert. Dr. Cowgill explained in his interview that during the Great Depression Marthana and Josephine traded the property at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. for the sanatorium. After the trade, Marthana, Josephine, and the two boys moved into an old barn-turned-residence that was located on the Mesa Vista property.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Miss Marthana Cowgill Dies After Long Illness. *Daily Camera*. 7 March 1967.

<sup>4</sup> Mesa Vista Sanatorium Purchased by The Misses Cowgill In 1930. *Daily Camera*. 13 December 1951.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Cowgill, interview by Sue F. Lacey.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Cowgill, interview with Sue F. Lacey.



Marthana served as president and owner of the sanatorium while Josephine acted as vice president and superintendent of nurses. In 1933, their sister Mary moved to Boulder from Texas and joined the business as secretary-treasurer. During WWI, Dr. Gilbert was enlisted in the military and served as a contract surgeon with the rank of captain. He had retired to consulting practice, but in Sept. 1942, he returned to active practice because of the need at that time for physicians to replace those going into military service. Dr. Gilbert remained associated with the Mesa Vista Sanatorium until he died of a heart attack in 1944. His obituary notes that he was “one of Colorado’s most widely known physicians and one of Boulder’s most prominent citizens.”<sup>7</sup>



Figure 12. Photograph of Sun Porch at 2121 North St. from Mesa Vista Sanatorium Brochure, c. 1930.



Figure 13. Photograph advertising “one of five bed porches” in a Mesa Vista Sanatorium Brochure, c. 1930.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. O. M. Gilbert Dies in Sleep Early Today. *Daily Camera*. 18 Oct. 1944.

With the advent of penicillin and the resulting decline of tuberculosis cases after World War II, the Cowgill sisters devoted the institution to treating tuberculosis among the Navajo tribe beginning in 1952. Funding became available through the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Dr. Joseph Cowgill noted that Mesa Vista was the only sanatorium outside of New Mexico that primarily cared for Navajo patients. Members of the Navajo tribal council frequently visited the Mesa Vista Sanatorium. Dr. Cowgill talks briefly in his interview about how Marthana became good friends with Annie Wauneka, a highly influential member of the Navajo tribe.<sup>8</sup> Wauneka's 1997 obituary posted in the *New York Times* states that she "received much of the credit for defeating tuberculosis among the Navajo beginning in the 1950s and received national recognition for her role."<sup>9</sup>



Figure 13. Navajo children and Ms. Marthana Cowgill at Mesa Vista Sanatorium, c.1950s

By the 1960s, the institution began to expand its services to take care of all types of chronically ill patients, and in 1964 the sanatorium underwent extensive modernization and construction of an addition. The facilities still exist today, and operate as the Terrace Heights Care Center.

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Cowgill, interview with Sue F. Lacey.

<sup>9</sup> "Annie d. Wauneka, 87, Dies; Navajo Medical Crusader," *New York Times* (New York City, NY), Nov 16, 1997.



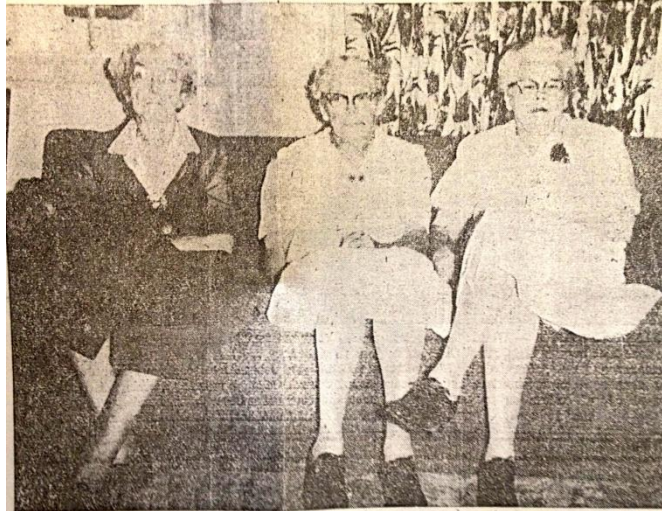


Figure 14. "The Cowgill Sisters – The Misses Mary, Josephine and Marthana."  
*Daily Camera*, July 15, 1960.

The Cowgill sisters never married. Dr. Cowgill became a prominent Boulder physician, a founding member of the Boulder Medical Center and later vice president of Mesa Vista Sanatorium. Bergen died in the 1950s, and David in the mid-1960s. Josephine died February 1, 1960, and was followed by her sister Mary almost a year later. Marthana died March 7, 1967. See Attachment D: Newspaper Articles.

The Cowgill sisters made a significant contribution to the treatment of tuberculosis in Boulder. The roots of their efforts can be traced to the property at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St., where they lived and operated a treatment home in the 1920s. The use as a treatment facility is expressed through its architectural form, with porches constructed at the rear and sides of the house with pocket windows to allow fresh air for the patients. The Mesa Vista Sanatorium, as well as the Boulder-Colorado Sanitarium, were major institutions in Boulder and drew many visitors and residents to Boulder.

#### **Subsequent Residents of 747 12<sup>th</sup> St.**

In 1940, Dr. Gilbert sold to Ralph and Dorothy Feather. Ralph attended the University of Colorado in 1938 and in 1940 worked as a janitor in an office building. The Feathers had three children, Gilbert, Gaynor and Kenneth.

In 1944, the property then passed to Lucile Tandy, who resided there until 1968. Lucile May (née Morrison) Tandy was born 1893 in Rockford, Illinois. She graduated from the University of Colorado in 1917 and also attended the Chicago Institute of Fine Arts. She married Ben G. Tandy in 1918 Worcester, Massachusetts. Her husband died in 1943 and the following year she moved to Boulder from Grand Junction. She was employed as a teacher in various Colorado locations including Louisville, and was a member of the

Colorado Education Association, and attended the First Baptist church of Boulder. Lucile died October 2, 1986.

Subsequently, the property passed from Mrs. Tandy to Rex Sheppard, who owned it from 1968 until 1970. From 1970 until 2013, the property was owned by Orval and Nina Johnson. It is currently owned by members of the Johnson family.

The 1991 Historic Building Inventory Form for 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. identified the main house on the property as being architecturally significant representing a type, period or method of construction, and historically significant for its association with significant persons and events or patterns. The garage is identified as a contributing feature of the property. The 2001 Re-survey indicated the buildings would be contributing to a potential local or National Register historic district, but would not be individually eligible at the local or national level.

#### **CRITERIA FOR THE BOARD'S DECISION:**

Section 9-11-5(c), *Public Hearing Before the Landmarks Board*, B.R.C. 1981, specifies that in their review of an application for local landmark designation, "the landmarks board shall determine whether the proposed designation conforms with the purposes and standards in Sections 9-11-1, *Legislative Intent*, and 9-11-2, *City Council May Designate Landmarks and Historic Districts*."

#### **ANALYSIS OF LANDMARK CRITERIA:**

Section 9-11-1, *Legislative Intent*, states:

- (a) The purpose of this chapter is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare by protecting, enhancing, and perpetuating buildings, sites, and areas of the city reminiscent of past eras, events, and persons important in local, state, or national history or providing significant examples of architectural styles of the past. It is also the purpose of this chapter to develop and maintain appropriate settings and environments for such buildings, sites, and areas to enhance property values, stabilize neighborhoods, promote tourist trade and interest, and foster knowledge of the city's living heritage.
- (b) The City Council does not intend by this chapter to preserve every old building in the city but instead to draw a reasonable balance between private property rights and the public interest in preserving the city's cultural, historic, and architectural heritage by ensuring that demolition of buildings and structures important to that heritage will be carefully weighed with other alternatives and that alterations to such buildings and structures and new construction will respect the character of

each such setting, not by imitating surrounding structures, but by being compatible with them.

- (c) The City Council intends that in reviewing applications for alterations to and new construction on landmarks or structures in a historic district, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board shall follow relevant city policies, including, without limitation, energy-efficient design, access for the disabled, and creative approaches to renovation.

Section 9-11-2, City Council may Designate Landmarks and Historic Districts, states:

- (a) Pursuant to the procedures in this chapter the City Council may by ordinance:
  - (1) Designate as a landmark an individual building or other feature or an integrated group of structures or features on a single lot or site having a special character and historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value and designate a landmark site for each landmark;
  - (2) Designate as a historic district a contiguous area containing a number of sites, buildings, structures or features having a special character and historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value and constituting a distinct section of the city;
  - (3) Designate as a discontinuous historic district a collection of sites, buildings, structures, or features which are contained in two or more geographically separate areas, having a special character and historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value that are united together by historical, architectural, or aesthetic characteristics; and
  - (4) Amend designations to add features or property to or from the site or district.
- (b) Upon designation, the property included in any such designation is subject to all the requirements of this code and other ordinances of the city.

To assist in the interpretation of the historic preservation ordinance, the Landmarks Board has adopted significance criteria to use when evaluating applications for individual landmarks. The criteria are included in Attachment A: Significance Criteria.

Within 45 days after the hearing date, the Landmarks Board must adopt specific written findings and conclusions approving, approve with modifications, or disapproving the application. Should the board disapprove the application, the board must notify City Council of that action within 30 days of the hearing date. City Council may call up a decision disapproving a designation. Should an application be disapproved, the same application may not be submitted for a period of one year.



If the board finds that the proposed designation conforms to Sections 9-11-1 and 9-11-2, B.R.C. 1981, it shall adopt specific findings and conclusions approving or modifying and approving the application. If the board approves the proposed designation, the application will be forwarded to City Council (within 45 days) for a public hearing. The public hearing before City Council must be held within 100 days of the Landmark Board's decision recommending designation.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

Staff's analysis is based on the criteria for review provided below.

***A. Does the proposed application protect, enhance, and perpetuate buildings, sites, and areas of the city reminiscent of past eras, events, and persons important in local, state, or national history or providing significant examples of architectural styles of the past?***

Staff finds that the proposed application would perpetuate a building and site of the city reminiscent of past eras and persons important in local history. The property has a strong association with evolving health care in Boulder during the 1910s through the 1950s in Boulder, particularly in the treatment and care of tuberculosis patients, many of whom came to Boulder specifically for health reasons. Staff considers that the application meets the historic and architectural criteria for individual landmark designation as outlined below, which was adopted to assist in the interpretation of this section of the ordinance.

#### **HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:**

**Summary:** The house located at 747 12th St. meets historic significance under criteria 1, 2 and 4.

**1. Date of Construction: 1916**

**Elaboration:** Tax Assessor records indicate that the building was constructed in 1916.

**2. Association with Persons or Events: Josephine and Marthana Cowgill**

**Elaboration:** Josephine and Marthana Cowgill, two sisters who operated a tuberculosis sanitarium in Boulder. The house functioned as a convalescent home for tuberculosis patients during the 1920s. From 1930 until the 1960s, the Cowgills owned and operated the Mesa Vista Sanatorium. It is possible and quite likely that the rear porches were constructed during this period to provide outdoor areas for consumptive patients.

**3. Development of the Community:** Following the Civil War, and construction of the railroads, mountain communities around the country including Boulder, were

popular destinations for the treatment of tuberculosis patients and other visitors hoping to improve their health. Opened in 1896, the Boulder Sanitarium stopped accepting tuberculosis patients after WWI citing concerns about contagion to other patients. Apparently responding to a shortage of treatment alternatives to consumptives in Boulder the Cowgill sisters, began taking consumptive convalescents into their house at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. beginning about 1920. In association with nationally noted physician Dr. Oscar Gilbert, the Cowgills continued nursing TB patients at the house until 1930 when they took over ownership and management of the Mesa Vista Sanitarium. In 1934, Gilbert bought the house which he sold in 1940. The Cowgill's adopted son Joseph went on to become a doctor and assistant director of Mesa Vista Sanitarium. For more than 50 years the Cowgill family and Dr. Gilbert engaged in innovative treatments of tuberculosis including those that took place at the Boulder-Colorado Sanitarium, 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. and the Mesa Vista Sanitarium. These efforts represent an important element of Boulder's twentieth-century history and development. The property at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. survives as an well preserved reminder of this chapter of the city's past.

#### **4. Recognition by Authorities: Historic Building Survey**

**Elaboration:** The 1991 Historic Building Inventory Form indicates that the house at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. is architecturally significant as it represents a type, period or method of construction, and historically significant as it is associated with significant persons and significant events or patterns. The form states:

"This house is significant for its association with Josephine and Marthana Cowgill, two sisters who operated a tuberculosis sanitarium in Boulder. The house functioned as a nursing home, probably for tuberculars, during the 1920s. The house is a well-preserved example of the Bungalow style popular during the early twentieth century, as typified by its hipped roof, brick walls, double-hung windows, and porch with brick pillars and walls."

No changes appear to have taken place to the buildings since the survey was undertaken. The 2001 Re-survey form indicates that the property would be contributing to a potential local or National Register historic district, but would not be individually eligible for listing at the local or national level. The basis for the 2001 determination is unclear. Staff considers that the property meets the significance criteria for individual landmark designation at the local level in terms of architectural, historic and environmental significance.

#### **ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:**

**Summary:** The house located at 747 12<sup>th</sup> St. meets architectural significance under criterion 1.

**1. Recognized Period or Style:** Bungalow

**Elaboration:** The house is an unusually well-preserved example of bungalow influenced house construction popular during the early twentieth century, as typified by its hipped roof, brick walls, double-hung windows, and porch with brick pillars and walls. Of particular interest is the use of blonde brick, corbelling at the south bay and north faces, construction of the enclosed rear and side porches of the house indicating early adaptive changes to the building, presumably, in response to use of the house as a convalescence home for consumptive during the 1920s. The garage appears to have been constructed somewhat later than the main house. Both the house and garage appear to be essentially unaltered from their original construction.

**2. Architect or Builder of Prominence:** None observed.

**3. Artistic Merit:** None observed.

**4. Example of the Uncommon:** None observed.

**5. Indigenous Qualities:** None observed

*B. Does the proposed application develop and maintain appropriate settings and environments for such buildings, sites, and areas to enhance property values, stabilize neighborhoods, promote tourist trade and interest, and foster knowledge of the City's living heritage?*

Staff finds that the proposed application would maintain an appropriate setting and environment for the buildings. The property is located within the identified boundaries of the potential University Hill Historic District of which the 700 block of 12<sup>th</sup> Street represents one of the best preserved areas of University Hill.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE:**

**Summary:** The house located at 747 12th St. meets environmental significance under criteria 1, 2 and 5.

**1. Site Characteristics:** The house sits on a large lot with mature landscaping, including large pine trees.

**2. Compatibility with Site:** The buildings are representative of the typical building patterns in University Hill and contribute to the residential character of the neighborhood.



3. **Geographic Importance:** None observed.
  4. **Environmental Appropriateness:** None observed.
  5. **Area Integrity:** The 700 block of 12<sup>th</sup> Street is located in the identified potential University Hill Historic District and retains a high degree of historic integrity to the original development of that neighborhood. The block is notably intact, with examples of an eclectic mix of architectural styles characteristic of the 1910s to the 1930s, including Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival and Craftsman Bungalow houses. Three houses on the block, including one that has been designated as an individual landmark, were designed by noted Boulder architect Glen Huntington. Many of the properties on the block are associated with significant figures to Boulder's history. In addition to the Cowgills, the block was also home to faculty members of the University of Colorado, prominent businessmen and socialites.
- C. Does the proposed application draw a reasonable balance between private property rights and the public interest in preserving the City's cultural, historic, and architectural heritage by ensuring that demolition of buildings and structures important to that heritage will be carefully weighed with other alternatives?*

Staff finds this application draws a reasonable balance between private property rights and the public's interest in preserving the city's cultural, historic, and architectural heritage. The property has exceptional historic significance through its association with the Cowgill sisters and the evolution of the care of consumptives in Boulder. Two generations of Cowgills were directly involved in this often overlooked chapter of history that saw momentous changes from the chronic care of consumptive patients, to cure of tuberculosis with the advent of penicillin, to direct and effective efforts to eradicating the disease in the Navajo Nation. To this extent, the property represents a direct link to the Cowgill sisters, Dr. Oscar Gilbert and Dr. Joseph Cowgill.

During the stay-of-demolition, staff and representatives of the Landmarks Board and Historic Boulder, Inc. met with the applicant and owner to discuss alternatives to the demolitions, including landmarking, rehabilitation, and the possibility of constructing an addition to the main house. The applicants have indicated they do not consider the buildings historically or architecturally significant and are not interested in preserving them. It has not been demonstrated that the cost of rehabilitation and the incorporation of the buildings into future development plans would be unreasonable. The house is located on the southern portion of the lot, which slopes to the north. This configuration would allow for an addition to the north that would not overwhelm the existing house. No major structural issues have been identified, and it has not been demonstrated that the cost of rehabilitation or restoration would be unreasonable. Considerable community

support for the proposed designation has been expressed through the demolition review process. At the June 4, 2014 meeting, Historic Boulder, Inc. spoke in support of imposing a stay on the property to explore alternatives to the demolition. The Landmarks Board has received letters from five neighboring property owners in support of the stay of demolition, and seven neighbors spoke against the demolition of the buildings at the June 4<sup>th</sup> Landmarks Board meeting.

Four neighbors spoke in opposition to the demolition of the house at the Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> Landmarks Board hearing and presented a letter in support of its preservation signed by 51 Boulder residents. Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, three neighbors spoke in support of landmark designation. In September 2014, an application for historic district designation for the 700 block of 12<sup>th</sup> St. was received but later withdrawn due to lack of support from the property owners. One property owner has indicated that they will submit an application for individual landmark designation for their property.

In the history of the historic preservation program, individual landmark designations over the owner's objection have occurred very rarely.

Of the 168 designated individual landmarks since 1980 (1974 to 1979 records do not clearly identify the initiator), 157 were initiated by the property owner. Four were initiated by Historic Boulder, one by the Modern Architecture Preservation League (Bandshell), and six by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. Of these designations, five are known to have been initially over the owner's objection:

- 1980: 2032 14th Street – Boulder Theater
- 1990: 646 Pearl St – Arnett-Fullen House
- 1998: 1949 Pearl Street – Campbell Grocery
- 2007: 1936 Mapleton Avenue – Frakes House
- 2007: 3231 11<sup>th</sup> Street – Chambers Cottage

The historic preservation code states that its purpose is to draw a "reasonable balance between private property rights and the public interest." In this case, staff considers that initiating landmark designation for this property may be appropriate, as the property possesses exceptional historic and architectural significance of state and local significance. At the same time, it has not been demonstrated that the buildings' incorporation into future development plans would be unreasonable.

The house is located on the south side of the lot, and the grade slopes gradually to the north, allowing for an addition that preserves the mass, scale, location and character-defining features of the house and also accommodates addition space desired for a modern residence. Character-defining features of the house include the hipped roof,

blond brick with corbel details, and the rear porches. An addition that is sympathetic to the historic character of the house could be approved through landmark alteration certificate review if the house were landmarked. For instance, constructing a substantial addition at the north side of the house would likely be feasible if it was setback from the front corner of the historic portion of the house.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A: Significance Criteria for Individual Landmarks
- B: Historic Building Inventory Record
- C: Tax Assessor Card
- D: Newspaper Articles
- E: Current Photographs



## Attachment A: Significance Criteria for Individual Landmarks

### SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

#### **Individual Landmark**

**September 1975**

On September 6, 1975, the City Council adopted Ordinance #4000 providing procedures for the designation of Landmarks and Historic Districts in the City of Boulder. The purpose of the ordinance is the preservation of the City's permitted cultural, historic, and architectural heritage. The Landmarks Board is permitted by the ordinance to adopt rules and regulations as it deems necessary for its own organization and procedures. The following Significance Criteria have been adopted by the board to help evaluate each potential designation in a consistent and equitable manner.

#### Historic Significance

The place (building, site, area) should show character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the community, state or nation; be the site of a historic, or prehistoric event that had an effect upon society; or exemplify the cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the community.

Date of Construction: This area of consideration places particular importance on the age of the structure.

Association with Historical Persons or Events: This association could be national, state, or local.

Distinction in the Development of the Community of Boulder: This is most applicable to an institution (religious, educational, civic, etc) or business structure, though in some cases residences might qualify. It stresses the importance of preserving those places which demonstrate the growth during different time spans in the history of Boulder, in order to maintain an awareness of our cultural, economic, social or political heritage.

Recognition by Authorities: If it is recognized by Historic Boulder, Inc. the Boulder Historical Society, local historians (Barker, Crossen, Frink, Gladden, Paddock, Schooland, etc), State Historical Society, The Improvement of Boulder, Colorado by F.L. Olmsted, or others in published form as having historic interest and value.

Other, if applicable.

#### Architectural Significance

The place should embody those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, a good example of the common; be the work of an architect or master builder, known nationally, state-wide, or locally, and perhaps whose work has influenced later development; contain

elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or be a fine example of the uncommon.

Recognized Period/Style: It should exemplify specific elements of an architectural period/style, i.e.: Victorian, Revival styles, such as described by *Historic American Building Survey Criteria*, *Gingerbread Age* (Maass), *76 Boulder Homes* (Barkar), *The History of Architectural Style* (Marcus/Wiffin), *Architecture in San Francisco* (Gebhard et al), *History of Architecture* (Fletcher), *Architecture/Colorado*, and any other published source of universal or local analysis of a style.

Architect or Builder of Prominence: A good example of the work of an architect or builder who is recognized for expertise in his field nationally, state-wide, or locally.

Artistic Merit: A skillful integration of design, material, and color which is of excellent visual quality and/or demonstrates superior craftsmanship.

Example of the Uncommon: Elements of architectural design, details, or craftsmanship that are representative of a significant innovation.

Indigenous Qualities: A style or material that is particularly associated with the Boulder area.

Other, if applicable.

#### Environmental Significance

The place should enhance the variety, interest, and sense of identity of the community by the protection of the unique natural and man-made environment.

Site Characteristics: It should be of high quality in terms of planned or natural vegetation.

Compatibility with Site: Consideration will be given to scale, massing placement, or other qualities of design with respect to its site.

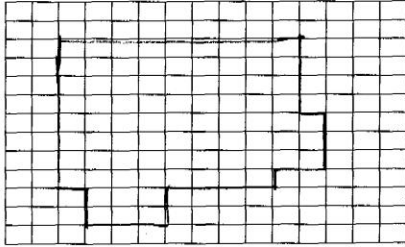
Geographic Importance: Due to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, it represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community.

Environmental Appropriateness: The surroundings are complementary and/or it is situated in a manner particularly suited to its function.

Area Integrity: Places which provide historical, architectural, or environmental importance and continuity of an existing condition, although taken singularly or out of context might not qualify under other criteria.





<b>PLAN SHAPE:</b> 	<b>ARCHITECT:</b> Unknown  <b>SOURCE:</b>  <b>BUILDER/CONTRACTOR:</b> Unknown  <b>SOURCE:</b>	<b>STATE ID NO.:</b> 5BL3195  <b>ORIGINAL OWNER:</b> Josephine and Marthana Cowgill  <b>SOURCE:</b> Boulder City Directory, 1918  <b>THEME(S):</b> Urban Residential Neighborhoods, 1858-present		
<b>CONSTRUCTION HISTORY (DESCRIPTION, NAMES, DATES, ETC., RELATING TO MAJOR ALTERATIONS TO ORIGINAL STRUCTURE):</b>   <div style="text-align: right;">CONTINUED    YES    X    NO</div>				
<b>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (DISCUSS IMPORTANT PERSONS AND EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS STRUCTURE):</b> The residents of this home in 1918 were Josephine and Marthana Cowgill. The Cowgill sisters moved to Boulder from Texas when Marthana contracted tuberculosis. Following her recovery, the two sisters operated a nursing home at this address. In 1930, the sisters were asked by Dr. O.M. Gilbert to take over management of Mesa Vista Sanatorium, which he had founded in 1918. They soon purchased that institution, which originally treated consumptives. The sisters enlarged the sanatorium and began to care for all types of chronically ill patients. The sanatorium became a family business, with several members of the Cowgill family operating the institution, including children that the sisters adopted.				
CONTINUED    YES    X    NO				
<b>SIGNIFICANCE (CHECK APPROPRIATE CATEGORIES AND BRIEFLY JUSTIFY BELOW):</b> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <b>ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:</b>            REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER            POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES            X REPRESENTS A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION         </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <b>HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:</b>            X ASSOCIATED WITH SIGNIFICANT PERSONS            X ASSOCIATED WITH SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OR PATTERNS            CONTRIBUTES TO AN HISTORIC DISTRICT         </td> </tr> </table>			<b>ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:</b> REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES X REPRESENTS A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION	<b>HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:</b> X ASSOCIATED WITH SIGNIFICANT PERSONS X ASSOCIATED WITH SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OR PATTERNS CONTRIBUTES TO AN HISTORIC DISTRICT
<b>ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:</b> REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES X REPRESENTS A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION	<b>HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:</b> X ASSOCIATED WITH SIGNIFICANT PERSONS X ASSOCIATED WITH SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OR PATTERNS CONTRIBUTES TO AN HISTORIC DISTRICT			
<b>STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:</b> This house is significant for its association with Josephine and Marthana Cowgill, two sisters who operated a tuberculosis sanitarium in Boulder. The house functioned as a nursing home, probably for tuberculars, during the 1910s. The house is a well-preserved example of the Bungalow Style popular during the early twentieth century, as typified by its hipped roof, brick walls, double-hung windows, and porch with brick pillars and walls.				
CONTINUED    YES    X    NO				
<b>REFERENCES (BE SPECIFIC):</b> Boulder Daily Camera biographical files; Boulder County Assessor records; Boulder City Directory, 1918.				
CONTINUED    YES    X    NO				
<b>SURVEYED BY:</b> R. L. Simmons	<b>AFFILIATION:</b> Front Range Research Associates, Inc.	<b>DATE:</b> June 1991		



Address: **747 12TH ST**  
**Boulder, Colorado**

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY  
**Cultural Resource Re-evaluation Form**

1. Resource Number: **5BL3195**

2. Temp. Resource Number:

3. Attachments

(Check as many as apply)

- ☐ Photographs  
☐ Site sketch map  
☒ U.S.G.S. map photocopy  
☐ Other  
☐ Other

4. Official determination

OAHP USE ONLY

- ☐ Determined Eligible  
☐ Determined Not Eligible  
☐ Need Data  
☐ Nominated  
☐ Listed  
☐ Contributing to N.R. District  
☐ Not Contributing to N.R. District

5. Resource Name: **Cowgill Residence**

6. Purpose of this current site visit: **Resurvey**

7. Previous Recordings: **Front Range Research Assoc.; June 1991**

8a. Changes or Additions to Previous Descriptions:

**Contributing outbuilding.**

8b. Square Footage: **2143**

9. Changes in Condition:

10a. Changes to Location or Size Information

10b. UTM Coordinates: **113 476457E 4427672N**

11. Changes in Ownership:

12. Other Changes, Additions or Observations:

13. Eligibility Assesment:

Individual:

National Register: **Not Eligible**

Local Landmark: **Not Eligible**

Local Landmark:

District:

National Register: **Contributing**

Local: **Contributing**

14. Managment Recommendations: **N/A**

Address: **747 12TH ST**

Resource Number: **5BL3195**

Temp. Resource Number:

**Cultural Resource Re-evaluation Form**

page 2 of 2

15. Photograph Types and Numbers:

Type: **b&w**

Roll No: **01- M**

Frame No: **29**

16. Artifact and Field Documentation Storage Location: **N/A**

17. Report Title: **University Hill Resurvey**

18. Recorder(s): **Kathryn Howes Barth, AIA; Lara Ramsey**

19. Date(s): **Nov 2001**

20. Recorder Affiliation: **Kathryn Howes Barth, AIA; Ramsey Planning and Preservation**

Attach Photo and Map if Extensively Altered

Colorado Historical Society, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
1300 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203





*Tax Assessor Card Photograph, 747 12th St., 1949.*

*043501*

*1949*

*Appraised 19*


## BOULDER COUNTY REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL

OWNER Louella M. Hardy

HOUSE No. 747 STREET 12<sup>th</sup> CITY Boulder

LOTS 55-26 BLOCK 32 ADDITION Union Place

Year Constructed 1916 Est. Life in Years




### ESTIMATE OF VALUATION *1949*

	BLDG. PART A	BLDG. PART B	GARAGE
No. Cable Feet.....	1150	600	
Cost per cu. ft. ....	\$ 23.13	\$ 14.67	
Total Cost.....			
Porches.....	120		
Garage.....		1467	1250
Extras.....		3,443	
TOTAL.....	2443	5160	1250
% Obsolescence.....			
20% Physical Dep.....	1000	1032	250
Net After Deducting Depreciation.....	1443	4128	1000
20% Utility Def.....	288	825	200
PRESENT VALUE.....	1155	3303	800

### BUILDING PLAN



### SUMMARY

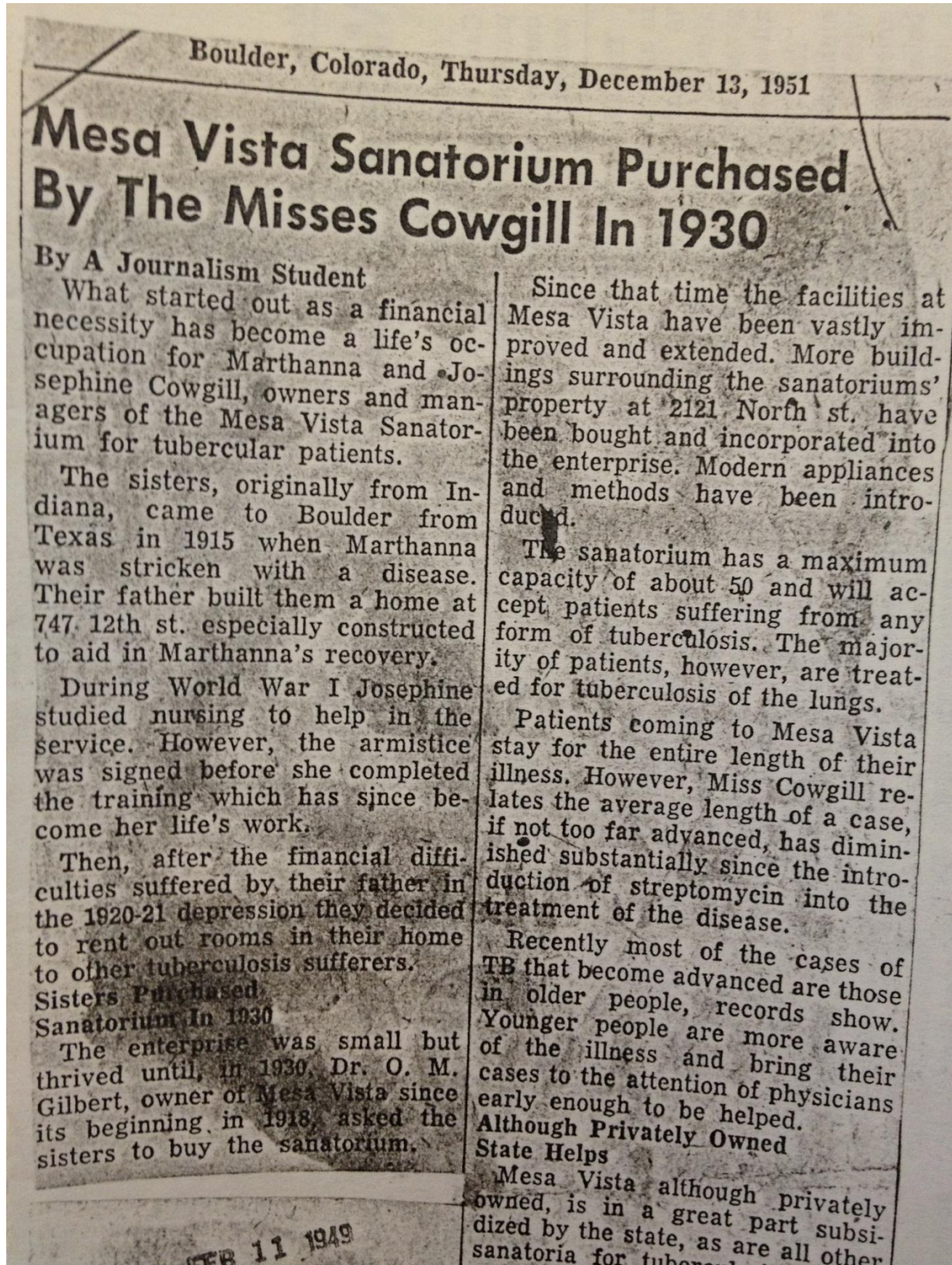
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	YEAR	LAND	IMPROVEMENTS	TOTAL
Building Permit	\$	1903	\$ 800	\$ 2050	
Original Cost, Improvements Only	\$	1903			
Additions and Betterments	\$	1940			
Owner's Estimate of Present Value	\$	1941			
Private Appraisal	\$	1942	400	2050	
Insurance	\$	1942			







"Mesa Vista Sanatorium Purchased by the Misses Cowgill in 1930." *Boulder Daily Camera*.  
13 December 1951.





1930, Dr. O. M. Mesa Vista since 1918, asked the e sanatorium.

11 1949

## Patients Help Of Therapist

al Service-Child has employed a tional therapist ta Sanatorium to such as weaving, and rudimentary ting.

rs a week in the Barbara Stebbins a junior in the college of the

d in the occupa- rk will be sup- er County Public t, which has also travel allowance

cases to the attention of physicians early enough to be helped.

### Although Privately Owned State Helps

Mesa Vista although privately owned, is in a great part subsidized by the state, as are all other sanatoria for tuberculosis in Colorado.

During the early part of the century, when huge masses of tuberculars flocked to the west believing the high dry climate here was the only cure for tuberculosis, Colorado felt the need of a state sanatorium.

However, by the time it was decided to build one it was discovered that with sanatorium care a patient afflicted with the disease could recover from it anywhere, although there is still a 10 per cent advantage in higher, drier climates.

Fewer and fewer people came west and the already existing sanatoria in the state were comparatively empty. It was then that the state decided to subsidize these institutions instead of building one of its own.

There are now 11 sanatoria throughout Colorado and a tubercular patient may choose to go to any one of them for treatment, providing an opening at the institution exists.

Mesa Vista is staffed by 18-20 especially trained people, including four registered nurses. Josephine is superintendent of nurses and Marthanna acts as general manager.

infected and since by its n

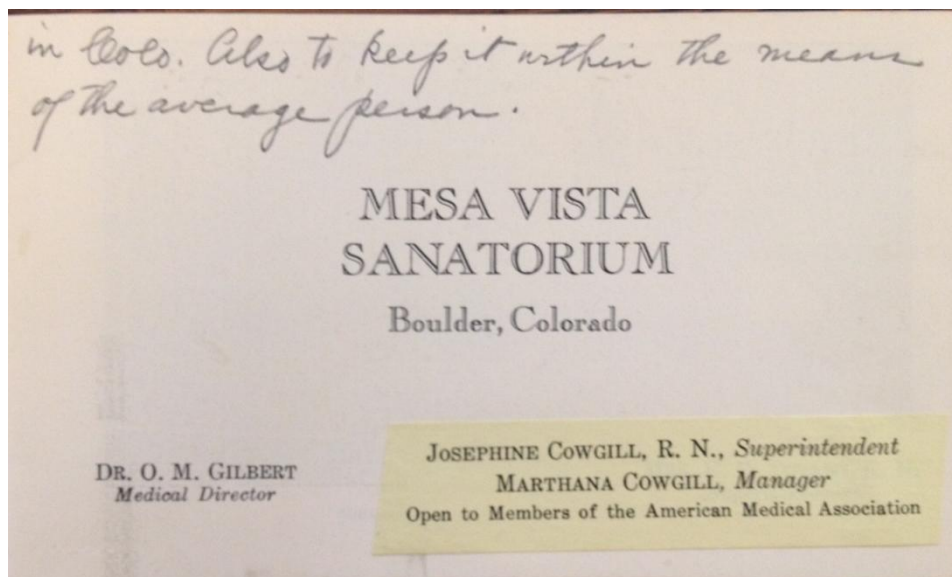
Included in figurines ma closely rese pom rugs 27 lamps made ble leather, tooled leathe purses and wa

The exhibit by the rehabi the Boulder Tuberculosis A mittee, headed Fenton, is a s tients. Membr the patients, i ing; take mag livering them p tients' rooms; a add something

Recently the mittee was ins chasing a sewir use of patients out of bed a fe day at least. T employs an occ and sponsors a class for the ber tients and the v tients to assist th able to go home.



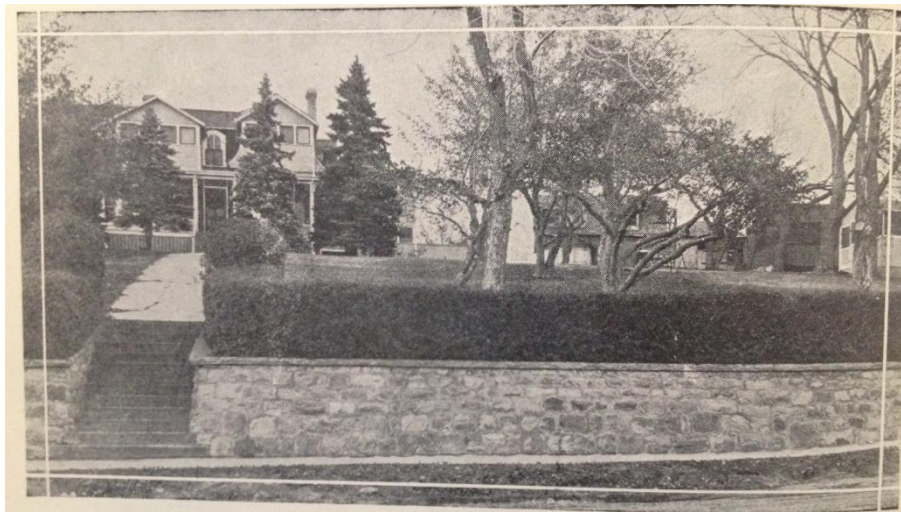
Mesa Vista Sanatorium Brochure, undated.







*Sun  
Porch*



*A Homelike Building and Grounds*



*One of  
the Five  
Bed  
Porches*

**NURSING HOMES** 35

---

**OPENING IN SEPTEMBER 1959**

# MESA VISTA SANATORIUM

A Medical Institution for the care of chronically ill of all ages.

A Nursing home for the care of the chronically ill and the aged requiring social rehabilitation as well as medical supervision.

Mesa Vista Sanatorium is located on PANORAMA HEIGHTS in Northeast Boulder, looking over the city into the Foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

**2121 MESA DRIVE** **PHONE HI llcrest 2-4037**

**BOULDER, COLO.**

Mesa Vista Sanatorium Advertisement, 1959 City Directory.

# MESA VISTA SANATORIUM

A MEDICAL INSTITUTION FOR THE CARE OF THE CHRONICALLY ILL OF ALL AGES



**A Nursing Home with the Aim of Discharging a Patient at Maximum Health Benefit**

- 24 Hour Nursing Service
- Complete Physiotherapy Department
- Occupational Therapy, Rehabilitation
- Completely New and Modern Building
- Completely Fireproof
- Large Rooms with Picture Windows Overlooking Boulder
- Bathroom in Each Room
- Large Dining and Recreation Room
- Located in a Residential Area
- 6 Blocks from Community Hospital
- Garden Landscaping

**1990 Alpine Av.** **HI llcrest 2-4037**

**BOULDER, COLO.**

Mesa Vista Sanatorium Advertisement, 1960 City Directory.



Attachment E: Current Photographs



*747 12th St., East façade, 2014.*



*747 12th St., North elevation, 2014.*





*747 12th St., West elevation (rear), 2014.*



*747 12th St., South elevation, 2014.*





*747 12th St., South elevation, 2014.*



*747 12th St., East elevation, garage, 2014.*





*747 12th St., South elevation, garage, 2014.*



*747 12th St., West elevation, garage, 2014.*



**Attachment E: Applicant Materials**